

February 6, 1837

TO ANONYMOUS¹

The Quill,² April 1895, 1:5-6

PRINCETON, Feb'y 6th, 1837.

My Dear Sir:

I am making preparations to sail in the packet of the 20th inst. for London, via Portsmouth, and will be happy to be the bearer of any communications to your brother whom I hope to meet on the other side of the wide water.

Please send me his address and an account of his movements as far as you have learned them.

I have just finished my college course of instruction by compressing into the space of three months the usual labours of a college year. I have occupation now for every moment of my time in arranging my affairs, and therefore cannot if I would, trouble you with a long epistle. I will however expect an answer to this of considerable length.

You will please to send your communications to me by Linn DeWitt (the brother of R. V. DeWitt) who is, as you know, to accompany me on my tour, and is now on a visit to his Brother previous to sailing. He will leave Albany to meet me in New York about the 15th, and may be found at his Brother's house near the Academy, Albany.

I intend to spend my time principally in the three great cities of Edinburgh, London and Paris. Neither my time nor my purse will permit me to travel far. I must therefore narrow my field of view within the scope of my means.

My objects are principally the following: 1st. The formation of personal acquaintance with men of science which may be the basis of future correspondence on scientific subjects. 2nd. The study of the modes of instruction in science. 3rd. The methods of making original researches in the different branches of science. In short, to make such attainments as may be useful either in the way of my duties as an instructor or in reference to my own researches and which cannot be obtained from books.

As I feel considerable strength on some subjects of science, I shall not be

¹ We have been unable to locate the original of this letter and the newspaper article from which it was taken does not identify the recipient. We speculate that Henry was writing to Julius R. Ames (*Henry Papers*, 1:213), an Albany lawyer. Julius's younger brother Angelo was in Europe at the time. In fact, Henry met Angelo in Europe a number of

times (see, e.g., Henry to Henry James, May 23, 1837, printed below).

² *The Quill* was the student newspaper of the Albany Academy. This letter is one of a number of Henry letters which the students obtained. It was later reprinted in the *New York Times*. A clipping of the *Times* version is in the Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

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ashamed to show my ignorance on others by asking questions even of an elementary nature.

Cannot you, without premeditation, pack up your budget, come to New York with DeWitt and start with us. I know you will not do so if you take a long time to consider on the subject. Your Philosophy will propose so many *pros* and *cons* that the decision will be as tardy as a Chancery suit.³

With the highest Respect,

Yours, sincerely,

JOSEPH HENRY.

³ The English chancery court was infamous for its backlog of cases and the delays involved in obtaining decisions. One member of Parliament remarked in the House of Commons that "a chancery suit was a thing that might begin with a man's life and its termination be his

epitaph." Richard Rush to John Forsyth, May 12, 1838, published in William Jones Rhees, ed., *The Smithsonian Institution: Documents Relating to Its Origin and History*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1901), 1:54.

TO ERASTUS CORNING

Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Princeton Feby 7th 1837

My Dear Sir

I am making preparations to sail in the Packet of the 20th inst for London and must therefore call on you for the funds of which I spoke to you when last in Albany. I will be obliged to make rather a larger call than I intended having been disappointed in receiving money from another source.¹

I will call on you through Mr R. V. De Witt of albany in about 8 days from this date for the sum of *nine hundred* dollars. I will send Mr De Witt an order on you signed by my brotherinlaw and myself and request Mr D W to give you a receipt for the money.

Mr De Witt will forward the money to me by his Brother Linn De Witt who is to accompany me on my Tour. He has been with me for some time at Princeton and is now on a visit to his Brother in albany previous to his departure.

I have been kindly furnished by Mr Van Buren with letters to our Ministers abroad and have received all the facilities for making such attainments in science as may be useful to myself and perhaps not entirely unimportant to the science of the country.

¹ The money that Henry was to obtain from Corning was part of the estate of his father-in-law; see the next document.